

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 62-78 and 80-83 are presently active.

In the outstanding Office Action, the title of the specification was objected to for not being descriptive. Claims 62-63 and 83 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kitayama et al (Jap. Pat. No. 2002-341639A).¹ Claims 64-67, 69-71, 74-77, and 82 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitayama et al in view of Sato (U.S. Pat. No. 6,798,430). Claims 68 and 72-73 were objected to for being dependent from a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 78 and 80-81 were indicated as being allowed.

Regarding the objection to the title, the title has been amended to be more descriptive. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to the title has been overcome.

Next, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 68 and 72-73 and the indication of allowance for Claims 78 and 80-81.

Regarding the rejection on the merits, Applicants respectfully traverse the outstanding 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection on the basis that Kitayama et al, having a publication date of November 29, 2002, do not antedate Applicants' earliest U.S. filing date of September 14, 2001. As such, the Kitayama et al reference is not 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) prior art, as asserted in the Office Action.² Nor is the Kitayama et al reference 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) prior art, as it was not known in the U.S. before its Japanese publication date of November 29, 2002 which was

¹ Note that the Japanese application publication number given in the outstanding Office Action for Kitayama et al should have been 2002-341639A, as printed on the cover page of this reference. The publication date of November 29, 2002 does not antedate Applicants' earliest U.S. filing date of September 14, 2001, as detailed below.

² Office Action, page 2, lines 13-14.

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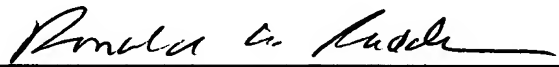
not before the September 14, 2001 U.S. filing date. Hence, Kitayama et al should be removed as prior art.

Having no outstanding rejections, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 62-64 and 82 -83, and the claims dependent therefrom, patentably define over the art of record.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
Ronald A. Rudder, PhD
Registration No. 45,618

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)
GJM:JK:RAR:clh

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